

ADDENDUM II: INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHER UNIONS IN NINE PROVINCES

Teacher Unions in KwaZulu-Natal:

NAPTOSA

- NAPTOSA would have preferred a Judicial Commission of Enquiry to the Ministerial Task Team.
- Its main interest is in internal organisational and educational matters.
- The Task Team should focus on the cadre deployment phenomenon.
- It is aware that posts are sold and that membership of a particular Union favours promotion.
- Observers of SGB selection panels have critical influence on the eventual recommendations.
- SGBs play many vital roles for schools – they should be capacitated.
- An ‘independent interim committee’ should be responsible for conducting interviews
- Resource Persons and Union alignment influence SGBs.

No representation in KZN by the PEU

SADTU

- There are sparse incidents of the buying and selling of posts by Union members. Unions have never resolved to sell posts.
- SADTU called on SACE to investigate this practice and encouraged the DBE to take the matter seriously.
- Allegations of irregularities are designed to inhibit SADTU’s contribution to and involvement in education.
- SADTU feels that sometimes its members are ‘prejudiced’ when seeking appointments.
- SADTU’s dominance (70%) in KZN is being used now “to dislodge us”. In fact SADTU applicants are stronger than the others.

- Cadre deployment does not occur as its officials achieve posts like “any other member”.
- Problems occur in Districts [Ilembe, Ugu and Umlazi, presumably] because of the corruption there. Events that occurred there were caused by “SADTU’s advancement on corruption”.
- SADTU “shares responsibility for quality teaching and learning in schools”, and “we have a common responsibility to ensure quality in the District”.
- “In KZN, SADTU is education and education is SADTU”.
- Build SGB capacity for the application/interview process.
- Clarify the role of Resources Persons.
- When the interviewing and selection process goes awry, “SADTU cannot keep quiet” and intervenes despite being only an observer.
- This Union rejects independent interviewing panels.

No representation in KZN by SAOU

Teacher Unions in the Eastern Cape:

NAPTOSA

- This Union has received no reports of the buying and selling of posts.
- As far as influence is concerned, during the selection process it is necessary to know “who is holding the pen”.
- Numbers of appointments are predetermined.
- NAPTOSA supports independent selection panels.

PEU

- The majority of District staff are SADTU members or supporters – they do influence SGBs.
- The transfer of powers from SGBs to Districts is likely to increase irregularities in appointments.

SADTU

[The SADTU representative is secretary of his Union's Task Team owing to the (temporary) disbandment of the Eastern Cape SADTU.]

- SADTU Eastern Cape will continue to regard reports of the buying and selling of posts as “some form of myth” until empirical evidence is produced for them to adjudicate.
- Since they have no hard evidence of such practices they find the statement by SADTU national sufficient.
- Since the SADTU Task team has been unable to follow up allegations about the buying and selling of posts, these remain a “myth”.
- On being asked whether any individual SADTU members might have been involved in practices of this kind, the answer was that without facts the question is offensive, tarnishing the Union without valid reasons.
- SADTU national's claim that the buying and selling of posts is “widespread” was news to the Eastern Cape.
- SADTU members' principal function in selection of candidates for posts is entirely limited to that of being observers of the process.
- There is no knowledge of members of other Unions being involved in the buying and selling of posts.
- This representative was unable to offer any suggestions for changes to policy of procedures which might strengthen the system since his organisation has not begun to consider this matter.
- The current role of SGBs causes discomfort because in certain circumstances their powers are abused and because they lack capacity. He was unable to comment on the option to remove powers from SGBs because much depends on how the proposal is made and whether his organisation has had an opportunity to consider it. If he were to offer an individual opinion “he will be taken for a hiding”.
- The relationship between the Department and SADTU are “not a walk in the park” and “sometimes they can be very rough” though not every day.

- SADTU decided in 2014 that it is “a trade union of professionals who are change agents”. Because SADTU is “politically oriented”, it cannot be only a professional Union but instead is an Industrial Union.
- In response to a reference that it has been asserted in the media that SADTU does not care about children, the representative said that he finds such a statement offensive and provocative. A SADTU slogan says, “We can teach and fight at the same time”, and the view that SADTU does not care about children is merely an unsubstantiated allegation.

SAOU

- This Union was unaware of the buying and selling of post prior to news reports.
- It is content with the current system of appointments.
- Vulnerable SGBs should be given training.
- Further intervention into appointments by the District would be a “violation of democracy”.
- SGBs **must** do the selection of candidates.

Teacher Unions in the North West:

NAPTOSA

- Concerned about protection for whistle-blowers.
- Concerned about broader issues than the buying and selling of posts.
- Unions are not invited to observe the ‘sifting’ process and receive information only after short listing.
- Grievance committees act inappropriately.
- Applicants should undergo examination of their suitability.
- Interviews should be conducted by an “independent recruiting firm”.
- Unease about cadre deployment from schools into the Department.
- SADTU members receive preferential treatment from the Department.

- Each member of the Combined Trade Union (CTU) should have individual observer status at post selections.
- Scoring of candidates at interviews is open to abuse.
- The Department connives with SADTU to unsettle other Unions.

PEU

- Unaware of its members being involved in the buying and selling of posts.
- Minority Unions are not always represented in appointment processes: make possible the attendance of individual Union representatives.
- Worried about the cadre deployment of SADTU officials.

SADTU

- SADTU condemns the practice of the buying and selling of posts.
- It has received no reports of this practice.
- 'Undue influence' is perceived because in every case SADTU members form the majority of candidates.
- SADTU does not undermine the Department.
- SADTU applicants are trained and empowered for their posts and hence are the most likely to be appointed.

No representation in the North West by SAOU

Teacher Unions in Mpumalanga:

NAPTOSA

- There is no concrete evidence of the buying and selling of posts and no member has submitted information about this or been accused of this.
- NAPTOSA not taken this matter seriously because (a) no evidence, and (b) the formation of the Task Team.
- Have received an anonymous call to say the buying and selling of posts in Bushbuckridge is "very bad".
- Whistle-blowers and informers have been given no assurance of protection.

- Post level 1 appointments are managed by Circuits and principals.
- No instance of a failure to secure appointment because of Union membership.
- Influence of “son of the soil” is problematic.
- Inadequate training of SGBs: some are trainable, others are not.
- Certain process by SGBs (e.g. scoring) not always reliable.
- SGB power is greater than their capacity.
- Even training could not prepare SGBs for appointing principals.
- The language medium of interviews creates problems for SGB members.
- Many SGB decisions are decided beforehand.
- Senior posts should be appointed by those in higher authority than the candidate.
- Cadre deployment and membership of a particular Union are seen as prerequisites for appointment.

No PEU representatives in Mpumalanga

SADTU

- SADTU is aware of the practice of the buying and selling of posts.
- It is also aware of various irregularities in relation to appointments.
- SADTU representatives act as observers only at SGB panel meetings, not as ‘influencers’.
- Irregularities occur with Circuit and District appointments.
- SADTU has taken no resolution to use kidnapping of officials.
- This UNION had difficulty getting answers to questions and information about events affecting staff appointments.
- SGBs are a product of the struggle and their role is transformative.
- Should changes be made to the constitution of SGB panels or in relation to SGB performance in governance?
- Some SGBs are easily controlled and manipulated by principals.

No SAOU representatives in Mpumalanga

Teacher Unions in Gauteng

NAPTOSA

- It is aware of allegations without any concrete examples.
- Trains its members to be observers of fair practice.
- Strongly supports SGBs in making appointments.
- Parents should not be removed from the appointment process.
- Opposed to reducing the SGB role in the appointment process.

PEU

- The practice of the buying and selling of posts is well known.
- Grievances of non-SADTU members are not attended to.
- Principals are “parachuted” into schools.
- The NSGB destabilises schools.
- Membership of certain Unions guarantees promotion.
- Every District Manager in Ekurhuleni is a SADTU member.
- Opposed to reducing SGB power to make appointments.

SADTU

- The buying and selling of posts is a product of talk, rumour and the media.
- None of the allegations have been confirmed by SADTU members. Individuals might prefer to speak to the Task Team.
- SADTU has issued statements and called for investigations.
- Transgressions reported to the Gauteng Department of Education have not been responded to – there is no “movement”.
- Union members are mere observers during the selection processes.
- All appointments are made solely on merit.
- SADTU’s power stems from its numbers and the insecurity of non-SADTU members.
- SGBs have an important role and there should be a focus on their capacity to fulfil their functions.

- SADTU would be happy to enter into negotiations over the role of SGBs in the recruitment process e.g. SGBs ought to co-opt necessary expertise.

SAOU

- Not aware of the buying and selling of posts as a prevailing practice.
- The recruitment process has been “hijacked by the Department”.
- Strong support for SGBs in the appointments process.
- No support for the reduction of SGB powers to make recommendations for appointment.
- SGBs should be empowered with new guidelines and budgets.

Teacher Unions in the Western Cape:

NAPTOSA

- There is no systematic buying and selling of posts in the Western Cape.
- This Union is aware of the practice of cadre deployment.
- Recommendations by SGBs of candidates for appointment are usually accepted by the Department. However, office-based educators are selected by the District.
- The online application system has made the process more “open” than before.
- Resources Persons are essential to the SGB selection process but they are not always available, causing delays.
- Each school should draft its advertisements for posts.
- SGBs are coping generally but there are major differences between fee-paying and non-fee-paying schools.
- Beware of over-managing professionals.

No PEU representatives in the Western Cape

SADTU

- This Union is unaware of instances of the buying and selling of posts.
- There no allegations about other Unions.
- Observers on selection panels need to give specific criteria.

- Office-based educators should remain loyal Union members.
- Public Service post selection processes should include Union observers.
- Those who feel oppressed by SADTU are “victims of themselves”.
- SGBs are neither sufficiently empowered nor trained.
- SGBs and Departmental officials ought to understand the philosophy of community involvement in education.
- Interference in the post selection process has come from the Resources Persons.
- Officials are guilty of preventing SGBs from making their own choices.

SAOU

- No system of buying and selling posts exists in the Western Cape.
- Nepotism and favouritism occur in certain cases.
- This Union favours the Grievance Committee route in the case of irregularities.
- Online applications have increased the open nature of the process.
- Resources Persons need to be restrained in how to use their presence and influence
- Each school should draw up its own advertisements.
- SGBs have multiple roles – even if they struggle in one area it does not mean that they are dysfunctional.
- Be careful of “managing” professionals.

Teacher Unions in the Northern Cape:

NAPTOSA

- Multiple irregularities occur with regard to appointments but no concrete evidence has been obtained. Observers report on malpractice but are reluctant to commit this to writing.
- There is some likelihood of the buying and selling of posts but NAPTOSA members do not only serve the Union, unlike members of other Unions.
- NAPTOSA’s member is 10% of the teaching corps and they have little say or influence.
- All Unions favour the appointment of their own members.

- No allegations have been levelled against their members.

SADTU

- Allegations in the media are being made to tarnish SADTU's image. This Union aims to provide quality education, to clear the record and move on.
- None of the allegations about the buying and selling of posts have mentioned the Northern Cape, and no allegations have been made about SADTU members.
- SADTU believes in fairness and that the best qualified person should get the post
- Only a few SGBs are not functional.
- Interference by political parties in education, about school tenders, is a new challenge.
- SADTU wants SASA amended so that powers concerning appointments should "be given to the Department".
- SADTU supports its members when they apply but does not promise people posts. Union delegates are trained to be observers and not to influence SGB decision-making.
- SADTU in the Northern Cape is patient and believes in engagement first but when there is no evident solution, they march e.g. a programme to remove the HOD in 2006.
- The Department is assisting with the transformation process e.g. SGB membership is no longer dominated by whites.
- Grievances are handled procedurally.
- SADTU has positive working relationships with District Managers.
- SADTU will submit written proposals to the Task Team.

SAOU

- Buying and selling of posts is occurring, but there are no facts. No allegations against their members.
- Grievances are about "racial issues" rather than influence through Union membership.
- SAOU is the second-biggest Teachers' Union in the Northern Cape.

- There has been no Gazette for Post level 1 posts since 2012.
- Many SGBs are not functional and the Department does little to strengthen them.
- Reconsider the SGB power to appoint principals.
- The current selection process is transparent until the Department changes SGB recommendations from 1 to 3.
- Need for applicants to provide reference letters and not only telephone numbers of referees.
- 'Son of the soil' choice of principals occurs in rural areas. [Vague and evasive in answer to whether this happens at former Model C schools.]
- SAOU has good working relations with the Department.
- It is difficult to transform the teaching staff.
- Former Model C schools are not resisting transformation.

PEU has no presence in the Northern Cape

Teacher Unions in Limpopo:

NAPTOSA

- NAPTOSA Limpopo has made no public statement about the buying and selling of posts as the matter has consisted of rumours without concrete evidence.
- The dominant faction in this Province "creates an environment that ensures that corruption will take place", not necessarily involving money but by means of influencing the decision-makers.
- All appeals against malpractice and dispute resolution are blocked to NAPTOSA members by means of the "undue use of power" against those who are not part of the Tripartite Alliance.
- Difficulties in relation to appointments arise over the ways in which the short listing process is manipulated. The short list is shown to "interested parties" prior to the selection process and certain names are "discussed and discredited" and not recommended by the SGB.
- The educator appointment process is good on paper but it lacks monitoring to ensure that people act "according to the system".

- About 25% of SGBs are functional, and the others “rely on what the principal says”. SGBs at ex-Model C schools cannot be manipulated by principals.
- A solution to problems over short listing might be to create a “common committee” that is not part of the teaching fraternity” and which manages the short listing and interviewing processes for promotional posts “under supervision of Union reps”.
- Another solution is to give the powers of SGBs to appoint educators to the Circuits.
- Strict adherence to policies will strengthen the system. The policies are good “but they are not adhered to, so nobody is implementing them”.
- It is important that all Provinces follow the same policy e.g. re-entry into the profession after resignation.
- There are so many educators who are ‘acting’ that the joke is that Hollywood has opened in Limpopo.
- People in continuously acting positions do not follow policy but wait “to see which way the water will flow”. This makes for instability, unpredictability and forms of protectionism including the “frog jumping” of unwanted officials out of their positions. Even MECs are impermanent and the HOD position has been an acting one for nine years!
- Many of the better teachers have moved to Gauteng where the education system is better managed there e.g. the majority of the Maths teachers in Limpopo are foreigners.
- “Maybe the sister union is running the Department”.
- “Our education system is going down the drain”.

PEU

- This Union has strong suspicions that posts are being bought and sold.
- The entire Provincial Education Department has been converted “into a recruitment agency of SADTU”.
- Complaints and grievances over irregular appointments are rebuffed by SADTU-dominated agencies and by officials in defence of SADTU members.

- PEU has not spoken publicly about the buying and selling of posts but they have engaged with the Provincial Department. They have also conscientised their members over this practice.
- Practices such as these occur in a context where non-SADTU members are evicted from their positions, including “employers, managers and principals” who are ousted to create a “vacancy for a member they want in”.
- PEU members are not involved in the buying and selling of posts.
- Irregular appointments happen “very often” e.g., SGBs are persuaded to change recommendations, usually in favour of a SADTU member, or else the Grievance Procedure is used to nullify decisions which SADTU does not approve of.
- Most problems in recruitment, selection and appointment of educators “are created by officials in the Department”.
- There is a need for a permanent HOD who is in control of the Department and who acts in the interests of all.
- “The employer should be the one who appoints educators”.
- 99.9% of SGBs are not competent to conduct appointments and they are persistently influenced by outside influences in the decisions that they make.
- Circuits are under the influence of SADTU which controls who gets appointed.
- Perhaps external experts should have the power to make appointments. The other powers should remain with the SGBs.
- SADTU’s initial intention was to fight for the rights of disadvantaged educators but now it members abandon learners “to push for their own things e.g. SADTU teachers attend memorial services every Thursday, leaving learner unattended.
- 98.9% of the children of SADTU leaders are not in public schools.
- There is a desperate need “to get back to basics”.
- SADTU is well aware of proper procedures but “they create their own scenario ... outside the law”.
- The advantages of SADTU membership are: (1) access to higher posts regardless of qualifications, and (2) policies can be easily violated as Circuit Managers, as SADTU members, will not act.

- Whereas PEU members are essentially concerned with the dignity of educators, this is not a feature of SADTU members.
- SACE is wholly dominated by SADTU (90%) including the CEO.
- PEU “members will not accept posts they don’t deserve to hold”.
- What is distinctive about PEU is its concern about the interests of learners.

SADTU

- 80% of educators in Limpopo are members of SADTU.
- Allegations of the buying and selling of posts are widespread.
- SADTU has not come across any such case.
- SADTU’s role in appointments is “limited to being an observer” of the process.
- Over two years there has never been a case at the ELRC where the claim was that a person had been deprived of a post because SADTU sold it.
- The weaknesses of SGBs are common knowledge. They need capacity building, but the Department does not do so.
- Under 50% of SGBs have the ability to make appointments and they should be capacitated and not have their powers taken away.
- Since education is a “societal issue”, it cannot be successful without the inclusion of important stakeholders [parents, communities]. If you take powers away from the SGBs this will “totally demobilise them from participating in the well-being and welfare of the education of their children”.
- Usually SGBs confirm the selections made by the interviewing panel but when, for example, a highly-regarded person in the community is not recommended, than a variety of tricks can be used by the SGB to nullify the decision such as not submitting documents to the Department.
- SADTU’s power is governed by its code of conduct and the presence of other Unions at the interviewing panel.
- SADTU’s overwhelming majority ensures that its members are frequently appointed. SADTU uses its power “to advance the best interests of our members – we are an entity that looks after its members”.

- If the rulers of this country felt that SADTU misuses its power they would “clip its wings”.
- SADTU is able to get rid of a DG but will only do so when that person becomes a “stumbling block” or is generally ineffectual.
- SADTU has no problem with outsourcing expertise since the majority of the people brought in will be SADTU members.
- There is a suspicion that the aim of the media campaign by the liberal press, supported by “certain academics”, as well the bringing in of the Task Team may well be to destabilise an organisation of civil society but is ultimately intended to weaken the ruling party.
- If a person has used funds to provide or acquire a post, then he/she should be charged criminally and SADTU will support such a charge in its determination to “clean ourselves”.
- Ascendancy and domination in all spheres are a hallmark of normal political life. The cadres who fought for and gained SADTU’s ascendancy and who advance it as a political entity should be those who are appointed for advancing that determination
- Do not imply when speaking of the “best teachers” that they are not SADTU teachers. Furthermore, the present system “does not disadvantage any person with the best [qualifications, ability?] to occupy whatever position”, as the situation in Limpopo can now attest.
- SADTU welcomes debate on all aspects of education in the relevant bargaining chamber where “we have the right to regulate the workplace”.
- There is a disjunction between policy and implementation and SADTU welcomes debate on ways of closing those gaps. Attempts to infuse such debates with ideology from liberals and outsiders will be met with resistance since “who is driving this policy, for instance, it’s a matter of politics”.

SAOU has no representation in Limpopo

Teacher Unions in the Free State:

NAPTOSA

- Some appointments to posts seem to be predetermined.
- No evidence of favour for material gratification.
- Members know NAPTOSA's stand on the matter of the buying and selling of posts and have been encouraged to report such incidents.
- Allegations in the media are confined to SADTU: no NAPTOSA members have been accused.
- Not all Departmental officials are able to act as Resources Persons – there is a need for training and selection.
- The role of SGBs is important.
- SGBs should either be trained to select candidates or not do so.
- "Son of the soil" appointments should be resisted.
- Principals tend to dominate SGBs.

PEU has no representation in the Free State

SADTU

- The media allegations lack substance. Those members who have knowledge of such practices have been encouraged to contact the Task Team.
- SADTU members are repeatedly cautioned about engaging in such practices.
- There is a particular media campaign against SADTU.
- 70% of Free State educators are members of SADTU and this influences demographics.
- No disputes arising from selection processes have involved the exchange of cash.
- Some SGBs are unfamiliar with legislation, especially shortly after election.
- The Departmental 'micro-wave' form of training is inadequate.
- Resources Persons are not always conversant with procedures.
- When the selection process goes awry, Union representatives and the Resources Person take the initiative.
- SGB panels are "often" manipulated by principals and Resources Persons.
- Advertisements are directed at individuals.

- SGBs fail to provide reasons for ranking recommended candidates.
- SGB weakness leads to intervention by Unions and Resources Persons.
- If Resources Persons were to be well prepared, then SGBs would be equal to the tasks of selecting candidates for appointment.
- Independent selection panels are not a viable alternative to SGBs because of incapacity at Departmental level.
- The time for a change for the better has arrived.

SAOU

- This Union has no sense of the buying and selling of posts as a problem.
- No person from SAOU has been guilty of this.
- There have been instances linked to other Unions.
- It is essential to retain the community in schooling.
- SGBs are of mixed ability and quality.
- SAOU wants to retain the present system – it is the only one in which Unions are observers.
- Community-driven schools are important.
- Principals should be appointed solely on merit.